The Congregationalist

VOLUME 2 MAY, 1959 NUMBER 5

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." — Galatians 5:1

STATE CONFERENCES AND THE GENERAL SYNOD

A Contributed Editorial

What will happen at the General Synod of the United Church of Christ, meeting this July? We know a few definite things, and examination of these can help us to make an "educated guess."

We know that in April 1958 the Superintendents received a letter from Congregational Christian headquarters asking them to see that the State Conferences elected delegates to this forthcoming meeting. We do not know whether that letter revealed the interpretation which would be put upon this election. But it is well to note that, while the first General Synod claimed to represent the General Council only, the Basis of Union (III-D) provides, "The Conferences, through delegates elected by them from the membership and ministers of the congregations located within their respective bounds, constitute the General Synod." All General Synods subsequent to the first are to be made up of delegates from the Conferences, and the Basis of Union claims that the Conferences actually "constitute" the General Synod.

"In Proper Fashion" — What Is It?

Thinking back ten years we remember the letter of May 18, 1949, from the "Committee on Procedures." In this document, which claimed to be authoritative, the statement was made:

> "The Committee on Procedures is advised by its attorneys that under the plan, the way a church can associate itself with the United Church is by electing a delegate to an Association or Conference which has established relationship to the United Church in proper fashion."

Repeated efforts were made to find out how the Associations or Conferences were to "establish relationship to the United Church in proper fashion." No public statement was ever forthcoming on this point. Nevertheless it would be natural to assume that the same principle, namely that of electing delegates, would hold in regard to a State Conference electing to General Synod as was suggested by this statement regarding a Church and its election of delegates to Conference or Association.

In support of the above suggestion, it is well to remember that, during the Cadman trial, Rev. Phillip G. Scott, then chairman of the Executive Committee of the General Council, testified on the above point as follows:

> *Question:* "What is the method by which a Conference or Association will establish relationship to the United Church of Christ under the Basis of Union, if you know?"
>
> *Answer:* "III-D (of the Basis of Union) says that through the delegates the Conferences will constitute the General Synod, so my interpretation of that is that if a Conference sends delegates, who will constitute the General Synod, the Conference is in fellowship with the United Church of Christ, if there is a recognition of the delegates." (Court Record, p. 1772)

So far as we are aware this is the only time that any person in official position with the General Council has stated the method by which a Conference would establish relationship to the United Church. Nor do we know of any subsequent statement which would deny the implications of the above statement as made in Court.

Another indication of official planning is intimated in the words of Dr. Robert W. Spike of the Board of Home Missions, in a speech he made to the State Superintendents at the midwinter meeting this year at Buck Hill Falls, Pennsylvania. According to the "Ohio Conference News" for March, "Dr. Spike told the Superintendents that as regional church administrators they hold 'pivotal positions' from which to influence 'a union to which all of Christendom looks with eagerness'."

Putting together the above bits of information, everything would seem to "add up" to support the idea that the sending of delegates by the Conferences this year will be interpreted as an act bringing the Conferences into the union.

Unjustifiable Procedures

In our opinion, thus to construe an act in which neither the persons nor Churches involved knew the meaning of what they were doing is not the kind of forthright dealing which should always characterize church procedures. For one thing, if the Conferences are to be regarded as part of the United Church of Christ through the election of delegates to the General Synod, a clear statement to that effect should have been made at all of the Conference meetings and to all the Churches before any electing of delegates took place.

Secondly, the Conferences are in most cases incorporated bodies which cannot possibly align themselves with a new denomination through the mere election of delegates at one of their annual meetings. These Conferences cannot make themselves parts of the United Church of Christ except by complying with the statutory requirements in their respective states and through the proper amendments, if such amendments are possible, of their present charters. The question of whether the State Conferences can legally join the United Church of Christ is one that the secular courts may be required to answer. The lawsuit now pending in the Federal District Court does not include any State Conference among the defendants, and presumably other lawsuits would be necessary in order to get a determination on the issues at stake.

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Rev. Neil H. Swanson, Jr., Milwaukee, Wisconsin

A Word About Money

Some people are hesitant to talk about money. I used to share this feeling. But not any more — not when I realize that certain causes I believe in depend on more money to achieve their goals.

In these days of increased emphasis on stewardship, you have heard that we cast a vote with every dollar we spend. On this basis, various forms of recreation (not to mention other things) receive far more votes than do organizations devoted to the furthering of religious principles.

The National Association of Congregational Christian Churches is not going to collapse for want of money. At the present rate of giving, we will successfully underwrite our minimum budget for 1959. But unless we can go beyond the minimum levels of giving, the many important items in our medium and maximum budgets cannot be realized.

If each member-church of the National Association would give each year the equivalent of two dollars per member to the budget of the National Association, we could underwrite our maximum budget. Do you realize that two dollars per member represents about nine-sixteenths of one cent per person per day? Don't you want to give more than that each day for the work of the National Association? And yet, only a small number of churches have pledged even this amount.

Special Contributions Needed

One thing you can do is to consider making a special contribution each year to the National Association. Many are already doing this. Such gifts have ranged from $1.00 to $5.00 to $10.00 to $50.00 to $100.00. And gifts have also been received in amounts of $2,000.00, $7,000.00, and $8,000.00. The two largest gifts were divided between the National Association and the Missionary Society.

Did you know that over 300 Congregational people who are in churches which are not presently members of the National Association have contributed over $3,000.00 to the National Association during the past six months through the "Friends of the National Association?" If such folks can make individual contributions over and above their church pledges, so can many of us.

This has been a frank statement about money and the ways in which it can help something you believe in. As you cast your votes by the way you spend your money, why don't you consider putting some of those votes into the ballot box marked, "The National Association of Congregational Christian Churches of the United States?"

Historic Congregational Symbolism

Rev. Robert B. Dempsey, Carlisle, Massachusetts.

In these turbulent days, we have come to realize that our Congregational forefathers had a keen insight into the essential relationship between Christ's rule of the local church, and the eternal truths of the Word of God. The men at Savoy saw this clearly. When modern leadership forsook these truths, they forsook the only enduring basis of our Congregational way of life. With the foundation gone, one should not be surprised that the polity built upon it is being abandoned for the shades of ecumenical night.

The men at the helm in the early days of Congregationalism were dedicated, intelligent and possessed of the ability to carry out the implications of their faith into all spheres of life. One of these spheres was the worship life of the church. There are those to whom the early New England churches seem barren and unesthetic.

In carrying out the full implications of the Second Commandment, our forbears established in their churches an eloquent, but intangible symbolism. They knew that tangible symbols become crutches to worship, and in varying measure receive the adoration due only to God himself. Genuine worship was the worship that originated in the heart, and not in the tangible appointments of a sanctuary.

Priests and Altars

Notice the great insistence of Congregationalism on the spiritual priesthood of all believers. Every Christian is a priest, but a spiritual priest offers spiritual sacrifices upon the spiritual altar of the heart. A piece of church furniture called an altar is inconsistent with such a concept of New Testament priesthood.

The early Congregational churches had no visible altar. The absence of such an altar bespeaks the complete adequacy of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the sins of all the world. Since the church never needs another such sacrifice, it needs no altar. The priesthood of the believer is based on Calvary, and Calvary was sufficient.

Another of the intangible symbols of early Congregationalism was the location of the Communion table. This table could be square, or round, or oblong. What appeared to the eye was unimportant. The important thing was the place where the table was situated. It was not upon the platform, but upon the floor. Here pastor and people gathered together as fellow believers around the Lord's table. They met here on the same ground — the atonement at Calvary. The pastor stood behind the table, so the picture of everyone gathering around the table would be part of the service. He did not stand in front of it, for it was not an altar, and he was not a priest.

The Prophetic Ministry

One last symbol of historic Congregational worship is worthy of note, the centrality of the pulpit. The parson was not viewed as a priest or primarily a leader of worship. He was viewed as a prophet. He stood, although inadequate and unworthy, as God's spokesman to the people. The minister of early Congregationalism had a message from God. This was the most important aspect of the service. The people were their own priests, but the minister was God's prophet. This was his central function, and it was symbolized by a central pulpit. Would to God, that in this confused and chaotic generation, the Church of Jesus Christ would sound forth the clear, strong directives of the Gospel!

It is the right of any Church to vote to have candles, brass crosses, altars and divided chancels. However, it is still true, that these are foreign to the spirit of historic Congregationalism. We should be keen enough to perceive that the lack of the prophetic message of the sufficiency of the death of Jesus Christ, and the oneness of all believers, has led many Congregationalists to the false incentives of ecumenism. The liturgical revival is the handmaiden of the ecumenical movement. Tangible trappings for worship and sacramental grace built the Rome we left, and they are building the Protestantism we do not want.

WOMEN'S WORK

"Tell Me A Story"

Mrs. Paul A. Quaintance, Los Angeles, California

"Please tell me a story" is a persistent and oft-repeated request of children which often finds the storehouse of adult imagination lacking. Telling stories to children ought to be an educational experience, pleasant and profitable to both teller and listener. Instead of fiction and imagination, why not turn to the lives of the Pilgrims and their children? Using the same characters but with new episodes and changing scenes, our children could come to know those forbears as friends and the story they wrote through their deeds would become an indelible lesson in history.

There are no more exciting plots for children's stories than those recorded in the lives of the Pilgrims and the thrilling experiences of their children. Their flight to Holland was an escape as full of suspense, disappointment and pathos as has been recorded in modern movie or television drama. If you have experienced moving from one community to another you know the excitement of the Pilgrim children in becoming accustomed to new ways of living among a people whose customs, language and dress differed from their own. And probably no trip could be planned today that would be as hazardous and as exciting, or as lacking in comfort and safety, as their trip on the Mayflower in 1620.

Exciting, and True

What child would not respond to the danger of storms at sea, the Mayflower's main boom destroyed and the ingenuity of "all hands on deck" in effecting its repair? Or to the rescue of a lad who, contrary to the captain's orders, wandered on deck during a storm, was washed overboard as the waves swept across the deck, and miraculously grasped the end of a rope that trailed over the ship's side, was hauled from the waves and over the rail to safety by a deckhand who thrust a boathook through the leather jacket he was wearing? Or again, shortly after their arrival in Plymouth, when a boy wandered far from the settlement, became lost in the forest, and spent several days with the Indians before being rescued?

Adventure, courage in the face of danger, and determination were part of the every-day living that forms a background of factual information that is valuable in understanding the lessons of history and in sowing the seeds of appreciation for our Churches and our country, for the "answerable courages" and sacrifices made on behalf of freedom, — freedom to interpret the Bible they could read for themselves, freedom to worship according to the dictates of conscience instead of the directives of a king, and freedom to believe that as children of God they could approach Him directly without benefit of clergy, bishop, or priest.

"Obtained With Much Hardship"

Drama? Yes, both comedy and tragedy. Plot? Yes, intrigue and counterplot. Many of them were heroes and some have died unsung. They were all subject to human errors, and the "villains" with whom they struggled were often close neighbors or married to their children! Guided by conscience and indefatigable in devotion to the welfare of Plymouth Colony, William Bradford was among the greatest of them all. His excuse for making record of the affairs of the colony is my own excuse for having thus written to you in this column: "We have rather noted these things, that you may see the worth of these things, and not neglicently loose what your fathers have obtained with so much hardship."

Tell your children many stories and often tell them of the struggles and conquests of the Founding Fathers in securing for us the freedoms we enjoy today and for the free Churches of our land. Then write them down promptly and enter them in the Educational Project of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches, in commemoration of the three hundred thirty years of continuous Congregational fellowship in America, dating from the forming of the second Church, in Salem on August 6, 1629. All entries should be sent to the office of the National Association by November 26, 1959.

"California, Here We Come"

Mrs. Walter W. Jones, Pomona, California

The Women of the Congregational Churches of Southern California are looking forward with pleasure to meeting women from all parts of the country who will be attending the Annual Meeting of the National Association. In this group are women from two new, free Congregational Churches, the Anaheim Community Congregational Church and the Church of our Saviour in the San Fernando Valley. You will recognize these as Churches which have been receiving help from you through the National Association. These fine Churches are progressing splendidly.

We hope that through the sharing of ideas and future plans, your visit here will be pleasant and profitable. We will be most happy to greet you in Los Angeles.

The Women's Commission

Mrs. George A. Berkaw, Detroit, Michigan

Correspondence reaching various members of the Commission seems to indicate that the program booklet *Stimulating Suggestions,* introduced last October in Detroit, is providing a springboard for truly Congregational initiative in planning devotions, programs, and service activities.

Many women's groups are contributing to the Missionary Society of the Congregational Christian Churches and to the special project. Piedmont College in Demorest, Georgia, was chosen by the women at the Detroit Seminar for their joint missionary effort, *the one* in which it was hoped all would share, for the year beginning January, 1959. Contributions from women's groups, as from churches and individuals, when intended for benevolences should go directly to Dr. Howell Davies, Treas., Missionary Society, Room 2308, 100 North La Salle Street, Chicago 2, Illinois. If they are intended for any special purpose, such as Our Shared Women's Project, the check should contain a notation to that effect; otherwise they will be used for the budgeted benevolences approved by the Missionary Society and undertaken by the National Association. In any case every penny will go for missions!

All expenses involved in the administration of these funds is met out of the general budget of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches, which likewise needs and deserves your full support. Donations to it should be sent to Mr. Paul R. Biggs, Treas., Barclay Bldg., Oregon City, Oregon.

Suggestions for the Commission, or inquiries or requests for help may be made by writing Mrs. Paul A. Quaintance, 408 South Highland, Los Angeles 36, California.

Oklahoma. Oklahoma City: The new edifice of Mayflower Community Church, Congregational (gathered in 1957) was recently dedicated. This Church, which started with twenty people, now numbers 230. Plans are also under way for erecting a Church School unit. Rev. Norman Whitehouse is pastor.

California. Pomona: Pilgrim Congregational Church, Rev. Raymond A. Waser, pastor, has announced plans for a "Completing the Job" drive, running from May 17 to 24, for raising $150,000 — to construct much needed classroom space and a youth chapel, and for an off-street parking lot. Mr. Fred W. Sharp is chairman of the drive.

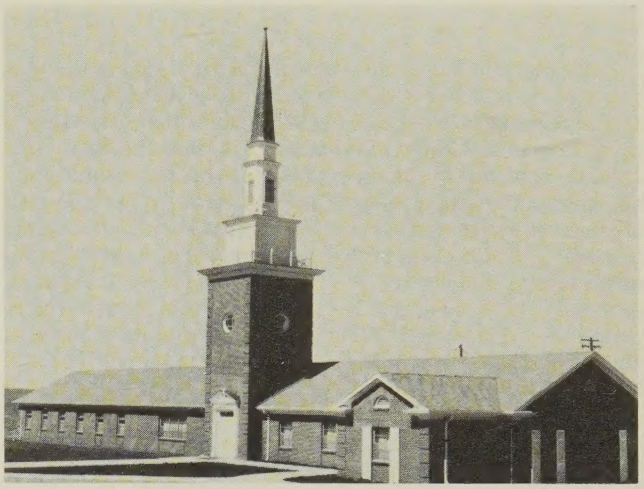
Massachusetts. Dedham: According to the Dedham *Transcript,* a "Congregational Christian Circle" was organized in Allin Congregational Church in February. The Circle plans to meet monthly to study the background of Congregationalism and the history of Allin Church, and to pray for the mission of the Church. The deacons have accepted the "Congregational Christian Circle" as a part of the Church program. As a study manual they are using "An Adventure in Liberty" by Gaius Glenn Atkins.

Iowa. Marshalltown: Music and its allied arts have a large place in the program of Christian Education and worship at the First Congregational Church, Rev. Max Strang, pastor. To a "Little Pilgrim choir," a "Hi choir" and the regular chancel choir for choral music, there has recently been added a Rhythm Choir for interpretive symbolism. It is directed by Mrs. Donald Allbee, who is also director of the "Hi Choir."

Rhythm Choir at First Congregational Church, Marshalltown, Iowa.

Wyoming. Cheyenne: Dr. John C. Blackman, pastor from 1921 to 1940, will be the guest preacher at the 90th Anniversary celebration at the First Congregational Church this June.

New Member Church: The Executive Secretary has received official certification that the Congregational Church in Pullman, Michigan, has voted to become a member of the National Association.



New building recently dedicated by Mayflower Community Church (Congregational), Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

National Association Commissions

Commission on Missions: Rev. Max Strang, Chairman, P. O. Box No. 163, Marshalltown, Iowa; Mrs. Warren S. Archibald, Conn., Mrs. H. E. Barg, Wisc., Mr. Frank Brezina, Ill., Rev. Herbert H. Duncan, Missouri, Rev. Bruce H. Masselink, Mich., Rev. George E. Mitchell, Ind., Mrs. Robert Palmer, Mich., Mr. Kenneth Payne Sr., Calif., Rev. John D. Rose, Mich., Rev. Leslie G. Deinstadt, Wyoming.

Commission on Christian Education: Rev. Robert H. Scanland, Chairman, 535 South Hoover St., Los Angeles 5, California; Rev. Leslie J. Barnette, Oklahoma, Rev. Walter G. Couch Jr., Mass., Mrs. R. E. Disselhorst, Iowa, Dr. Robert Frehse, Mich., Mrs. Henry David Gray, Conn., Miss Katherine Lenroot, N. Y., Mr. William Stoufer, Calif., Mr. Laurance Frost, N. Y., Mrs. Max Strang, Iowa.

Commission on Women's Work: Mrs. Paul A. Quaintance, Chairman, 408 South Highland Ave., Los Angeles 36, Calif., Mrs. Robert E. Collins, Assistant Chairman, Mich., Mrs. E. E. Adams, Iowa, Mrs. George E. Berkaw, Mich., Mrs. Ernest Crosby, Conn., Mrs. Roy E. Goodyear, Penna., Mrs. George Mead, Conn., Mrs. Herbert Phelps, Wisc., Mrs. William Schmitz, Mich.

Commission on the Ministry: Rev. Arthur A. Rouner, Chairman, 350 Clinton Ave., Brooklyn 5, N. Y., Rev. Myron R. Bunnell, Mass., Dr. Marion J. Bradshaw, Me., Rev. Russell J. Clinchy, N. Y., Rev. John F. C. Green, Penna., Mr. George E. Gullen Jr., Mich., Mr. James C. Ingrebretsen, Calif., Professor Lamont Okey, Mich., Mr. Walter C. Schmitter, Wisc., Rev. Raymond A. Waser, Calif., Rev. Norman Whitehouse, Okla.

Commission on Publications: Rev. Henry David Gray, Chairman, Main and Buckingham Sts., Hartford 3, Conn., Miss Evelyn Bumgarner, Mich., Rev. John W. Claxton, Mich., Rev. Howard J. Conn., Minn., Mrs. Carl Masson, Mass., Rev. Hugo R. Pruter, Ill., Mrs. Helen Richardson, Wisconsin.

"SPEAK FOR YOURSELF, JOHN"

Dr. Henry David Gray, Hartford, Connecticut

"One of the unheralded blessings" of union with the Evangelical and Reformed Church, "is that our Churches will be relieved of the need to propagate a nebulous something known as Congregationalism," writes the Rev. Dr. John R. Scotford in the spring issue of the denominational house-organ known as *The Ministers' Quarterly*. The gist of the rest of the article is that "Realistically speaking (we are) a group of Churches without either a clearly defined common belief or a common ancestry, organized primarily on a basis for getting done the things which Churches ought to do." The indictment sounds imposing. *But of whom is it an indictment?* One is inclined to say, "Speak for yourself, John."

One hundred and sixty Congregational Christians have died as martyrs. Many were killed because they were Christians bearing their witness in the midst of an Islamic, Buddhist, Hindu or other non-Christian Culture in a time of persecution or massacre.

Testimony of the Martyrs

But amongst the one hundred and sixty were a significant number who lived in nominally Christian countries, and who were killed, not because they were Christians, but because they were *Congregational* Christians. Apparently these martyrs thought their *Congregational* convictions worth dying for!

Consider the testimony of a few of these martyrs, as given in their own words. Richard Fitz, before 1571, was killed in London because he believed that one of the marks of a Church of Christ was "laste of all, to have, not the filthie Cannon lawe, but siplyne and onelye and all together agreeable to the . . . wordes of our good Lord." Before 1581, Mr. Patterson of London died because he defied Bishop Grindal, saying that "the Archbishop of archbishops" (Jesus) commissioned him to preach and "I may not disobey Him to obey you". In 1593 Henry Barrow, John Greenwood, and young John Penry of Wales were all hanged, two of them having spent years in prison, because of their free *Congregational* principles.

Testimony of the Thinkers

It may be well also to consider the testimony of those men of great intellect and devout spirit who first clearly differentiated the Congregational Way from the Presbyterian. They were called "the dissenting brethren" because during the two years of the Westminster Assembly they oft expressed their dissent from the predominant Presbyterianism of that assembly. Chief among them were Thomas Goodwin, president of Magdalene College, Oxford, Philip Nye, lecturer at Westminster Abbey, and John Owen, then minister of the Southwark Church in London, a gathered Church.

The dissenters were leaders in the remarkable conference, consisting of about two hundred delegates and messengers from about one hundred twenty Churches, which met at Savoy Palace in the autumn of 1658. The Savoy Confession of Faith is often said to be "the same as" that of the Westminster Assembly. This is a partial and misleading statement. The great truths of New Testament Christianity are stated in both documents, and in that they are alike. *But the Savoy disclaims all Presbyterian polity and all exclusive sacramentalism and all else which is in conflict with the free, spiritually awakened faith of the New Testament.* It is possible to see exactly what were the *Congregational* convictions of these men. There could seem to be no lack of definite conviction in either the martyrs or in the men of Savoy.

Testimony in Our Own Country

And what shall we more say of the great company of witnesses in our own land and in lands far and near? Consider Thomas Hooker and his hundred, trekking through the wilderness to found a new settlement, leaving behind the security of the Bay Colony, in order to bear a more *Congregational* Christian witness!

Consider what happened when Samuel Stone tried to make Presbyterians out of Hooker's Congregationalists! A new Church was founded to bear witness to free Congregational principles. Consider Horace Bushnell, saintly soul, acute scholar, great heart, whom men sought to hale before the Hartford North Consociation, in order to try him for heresy! What happened? His Church unanimously left the Consociation, and as a matter of fact, gave the final push which sent the whole quasi-Presbyterian consociation system to its grave.

Consider the clear, vivid expositions of Congregational usage written by Dr. Henry M. Dexter and Dr. William E. Barton! There is no lack of clarity there. Nor is there in the "Polity and Unity" Report — the only thorough study of our polity in this century, made on the basis of our charters, constitutions, and other fundamental documents.

Speak For Yourself, John!

It may be true, as Dr. Scotford claims, that either he or his generation found the Congregational Way "a nebulous something." It may be that he and others of his frame of mind have failed to find the values in the Congregational Way which made men willing to die for it and eager to live for it, believing that *this* Way is a true reflection of the gospel Church, and offers the loftiest, the most inclusive, and the most Spirit-dependent fellowship which God has yet created.

It may be true that Dr. Scotford is not responsive to the claim of Christ in a voluntary, free fellowship which depends only and solely on conviction, conscience, and Christ. It may be so . . . It may be so . . . If it is so, then one is inclined to say, "Speak for yourself, John."

GLEANINGS

From Committee and Commission Meetings

The Interim Committee of the Executive Committee of the National Association met in Detroit on April 6 and 7, with Dr. Harry R. Butman, Professor George V. Bohman, Dr. Max Strang and Mr. Gordon W. Kingsbury present, together with Rev. Neil H. Swanson Jr. and Rev. Joseph J. Russell *ex-officio*. Much of the business concerned the program and arrangements for the Annual Meeting. The phrase "Let Freedom Ring" was selected as the theme for that meeting, partly because of its nearness to the Fourth of July, and more especially because it was in Park Street Church, Boston, a member Church of the Association, that the hymn from which the words are taken, was first sung. The proposal to have a National Youth Meeting in connection with the meeting was approved.

The chairman was instructed to summarize the Proposals Concerning Legal Structure, incorporating certain

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Congregational Bookshelf

Rev. Royal G. Davis, Los Angeles, California

Dr. Charles F. Jacobs relates the hopes and fears of the modern novel and autobiography to the everlasting verities of the Christian Gospel. Starting where men are with the books-of-the-month he goes on to see the solution to their problems, the answers to their questioning, the salve for their hurts, in the affirmations of basic Christianity. THE DIGNITY OF THE UNDEFEATED shows so persuasively that all ages look upward, onward, to the radiant light from God. Midwestern Congregationalism should be proud of the minister at Waterloo, Iowa who can so appealingly start with Ernest Hemingway or Aldous Huxley, Ethel Waters or James Baldwin, and draw one ever higher to the sublimity of religion at its best. (Christopher $3)

Dr. William Pierce, active layman of the Congregational Church of the Messiah and curator emeritus of entomology at Los Angeles County Museum, has put in one volume almost all the early documents about Jesus, those the Catholic Church accepted and those she condemned. He thus presents what Christianity in the 2nd and 3rd centuries believed about the Man of Nazareth. JESUS, INTERPRETER OF THE ETERNAL adds to this the noble, inspiring reflections of a science-trained and religion-oriented man of today. Each age can find in Jesus what it wants, needs, and believes in most. (Pageant $5)

Ministers often complain that the Bible has become a mere store-all for souvenirs or one more decoration for the bridal trousseau. Dr. Henry David Gray makes the Scriptures throb with contemporary relevance. THE UPWARD CALL shows how Paul's ancient epistle to the Philippians is as vital and exciting as a letter in the morning mail. A classic is a book that speaks in stirring fashion to every generation. The Moderator of the National Association has made Philippians into such a classic. Written for youth, here is the gift for the high-school graduate, the adolescent awakening to the Christian challenge, or the teen-ager who thinks Biblical religion is nonsense from far away and long ago. (Abingdon-Cokesbury)

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suggested modifications, and send the summary to all interested parties.

The Treasurer's Report showed a gratifying balance in the treasury on March 31, indicating that if the present rate of income is continued throughout the year, the "minimum budget" authorized at the 1958 Annual Meeting will be exceeded.

It was voted to extend the time on the Educational Project Contest to Thanksgiving Day, 1959.

Commission on the Ministry

Problems of lay leadership for our Churches were among the matters discussed at the meeting of this Commission on April 9 and 10 in Chicago. A sub-committee on post-graduate theological study was appointed, with Dr. Marion John Bradshaw of Bangor, Maine, as chairman, and another sub-committee on a Christian Life Service League will have Rev. Myron R. Bunnell of Adams, Massachusetts as chairman. Much thought was given to the enlistment of area representatives in various parts of the country, to help in the field of pastoral relations. At the close of the sessions, Dr. Arthur A. Rouner of Brooklyn, N. Y., was elected as chairman of the Commission.

OUR DEVOTIONAL COLUMN

Rev. Robert Haldane, Sr., Portland, Maine

When Dr. Charles R. Brown was the Dean of the Yale Divinity School, he wrote a little book entitled "The Honor of the Church." It was prompted and keynoted as follows: "It is considered very good form and very good fun in certain quarters these days to maul the church. It is a chilly day when some light-hearted newspaper reporter does not make merry in a column or two over what he regards as 'the faults and failures of the Protestant Church.' . . .In my judgment it is poor business all around. It gives aid and comfort to the enemy. It amuses some, wounds many, and helps none. I wish to protest against it, and to say a word here as straight and as strong as I know how to make it for 'the honor of the church.'"

The spirit of the times which prompted Dr. Brown to write his defense and appeal for the honor of the church is current in our generation, though of differing outward form. So many are so occupied with "the faults and failures of the Protestant Church" (for which a Super-church panacea is offered) that the honor of the Church, indeed the faith of many in the Church, is besmirched, diluted, or destroyed. A compulsive protest arises from the breast of those for whom such a faith and such honor is vital. We plead, as did Dr. Brown, for restoration of faith and confidence in the Protestant Church and her honor.

This Church described by Paul in biological terms, a body, an organism, must obviously have a variety of organs and limbs and also the limitations of human organisms. But it is also more than its organic manifestations. Its spirit is the Spirit of God which was in Christ, its "soul" is the mystical reality by which the persons who constitute it are "members one of another" and are "One" in spirit, purpose, and love.

The honor of such a church and confident participation in it is vital for those seeking maturity of faith, broadened vision and renewed strength. Created dependent, we simply cannot walk alone in the face of trials, dangers, challenges, and aspirations of life. Nor can the Christian perspective which Jesus referred to as "wholeness" be achieved or maintained in the sole company of "Job's friends." While God works in many varied and mysterious ways He generally and most effectively chooses to work His works and minister to His children through men. Only in the fellowship of those who own one another's joys and sorrows, hopes and frustrations, — approached in confidence — can we receive the full measure of God's blessing for us — know the help of "rod and staff" for our "valley of the shadow," and find rewarding expression for the joys and insights He vouchsafes to us.

Vital to my "creed" is: "I believe in the Church." He who besmirches the honor of the church robs men of God's most vital outreach. Let faith soar full and free!

Prayer: Eternal God, Father and Friend, abide with Thy Church in every part and place; and help me to believe in her, share in her life, and find there the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Make me a spokesman in word and deed for her honor, as for the honor of my Master in whose name and spirit I pray. Amen.

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THE ANNUAL MEETING

June 30—July 1-2, 1959

Although many of the details of the 1959 Annual Meeting of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches are not yet definite, it is safe to say that the high standards set at the previous meetings will be sustained. First Congregational Church, Los Angeles, the host Church, is "going all-out" to make this a memorable occasion. Detailed announcements as to program, accommodations and other matters will be mailed to all member Churches in ample time to make plans.

The Executive Committee and the several Commissions will meet on Monday afternoon and evening, June 29, and the Association meeting itself will be called to order on Tuesday morning by Dr. Henry David Gray of Hartford, Moderator. In addition to the business sessions during the three day period there will be devotional services, seminar meetings, and addresses by men of note.

Combine Business and Pleasure

It is expected that many delegates and visitors from our Churches will combine the opportunity to give serious consideration to the challenge before our free fellowship and that of seeing some of the fabulous places in the Los Angeles area. Short trips to interesting spots will be arranged, and many who are making the journey from the East will plan on sightseeing before or after the meeting. Among the places of exceptional interest within a few hours' drive are the Yosemite Valley (200 miles), the great two hundred inch telescope at Mount Palomar (three hours), and the Mexican border with its opportunity for purchase of silver and leather articles (three and one half hours). A Gray Line tours folder will be included in the packet of material soon to be sent out.

Camp For Children

In order that families may make the trip, the First Church of Los Angeles has made available the 260 acre Cedar Lake Camp, for boys and girls who have completed third grade in school. Transportation will be arranged leaving for camp on Monday morning June 29, returning Thursday afternoon July 2. The cost will be $10 — per person. Sleeping bags will be needed, along with waterproof jackets or coats. Swim suits are of course called for.

For younger children (nursery through grade 3) arrangements will be made at the church. Various activities will be provided for them, of which detailed announcement will be made later.

Have Your Church Represented!

Every member Church is entitled to one vote at the meetings. It is sincerely hoped that most Churches will send one or more of their own members. Those which cannot do so may be represented by "proxies," any persons duly elected by the Churches to be their legal messengers. Delegates eligible for participation in the travel pool will be entitled to share the available funds on a pro-rata basis. Will *you* make it *your* duty to urge that *your* Church be represented?

From the Letter Box

To the Editor of THE CONGREGATIONALIST:

The publication of the Proposed New Statement of Faith for the United Church of Christ, in the press and in the UNITED CHURCH HERALD, focuses attention upon the whole matter of a stated creed.

In the fellowship of the Congregational Christian Churches, each church has been free to write for itself any statement of belief it wished to use, or to use none. Not since the meeting of the Congregational National Council in Kansas City in 1913, has the Congregational, later the Congregational Christian denomination, tried to formulate its belief. That Kansas City Statement of Faith, still honored and reprinted in the latest hymnal, was not intended as a test for membership, nor has it generally been so considered. It has never been mandatory upon the churches to use it.

It is good for any of us to try to put our beliefs into words. The attempt helps us to find out what we do believe. Probably if we made the attempt at several different times in our lives, we should find the statements decidedly different because of the growth and change in our thinking. If at any point in our lives, we considered our statement final, we might inhibit further thought.

To feel that a settled creed is a necessary part of worshipping God is far from Congregational practice. A set statement of faith not only does not allow for growth, but it does not allow for such diversity and freedom of individual belief as Congregationalists have always cherished.

Beloit, Wisconsin — MRS. ROBERT K. RICHARDSON

OUR COVER PICTURE

The Haystack Monument

In a quiet grove a few minutes walk from the Williams College campus, Williamstown, Massachusetts, stands the monument erected to mark "The Birthplace of American Foreign Missions — 1806." It is a well-known story among Congregationalists, how on a sultry Sunday afternoon Samuel J. Mills, James Richards, Francis L. Robbins, Harvey Loomis and Byram Green, students at what was then a young backwoods college, walking and discussing their life work plans, took refuge from a summer thundershower behind a haystack and in an impromptu prayer meeting dedicated themselves to carrying the gospel of Christ to those who knew Him not.

These young men, all coming from the little Congregational Churches of an isolated hill-country, began what has become one of the great Christian movements of our day. It was the Spirit of Christ working in their hearts that prompted it. We sometimes hear it said that if the church today is to fulfill its missionary task, it must be highly organized. But the Haystack boys began this work before ever there was a General Council, a State Conference, a District Association, or an ecumenical movement. American foreign missions were born because five country boys felt the call of Christ to this work. The Haystack Monument should be a reminder that the essence of Christianity is not in an organization but in the dedicated spirit of even the humblest of men and women.

(Photo courtesy of Williams College)